DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 353 966 IR 015 928

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|---|---|
| TITLE | How To Prepare Effective Flip Charts. |
| INSTITUTION | National Audio-Visual Supply, East Rutherford, NJ. |
| PUB DATE | Oct 92 |
| NOTE | 8p.; For related guides, see IR 015 929-930. Equipment and supplies catalog pages were removed prior to filming. |
| AVAILABLE FROM | National Audio-Visual Supply, 1 Madison Street, East Rutherford, NJ 07073 ($7.50). |
| PUB TYPE | Guides - Non-Classroom Use (055) |
| EDRS PRICE | MF01/PC01 Plus Postage. |
| DESCRIPTORS | Audiovisual Aids; *Display Aids; Educational Media; Guidelines; Illustrations; Instructional Materials; *Material Development; Meetings; *Production Techniques; *Visual Aids; Visual Stimuli |
| IDENTIFIERS | *Flip Charts |

ABSTRACT

Designed to help create effective flip chart presentations, this guide contains the basic techniques and helpful hints necessary to produce professional, attention-getting flip charts in a step-by-step procedure format. Five topics are addressed in the guide: (1) eight steps to a successful meeting presentation; (2) advantages of flip chart presentations; (3) how to design a flip chart; (4) guidelines for professional looking flip charts, including lettering, color, and nonverbal symbols; and (5) special presentation effects, including reveals and orchestration of visuals. (ALF)

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# HOW TO PREPARE EFFECTIVE FLIP CHARTS

This guide is designed to help you create effective flip chart presentations. Inside you will find the basic techniques and helpful hints necessary to produce professional, attention getting flip charts, presented in a simple step by step format. Follow these recommended guidelines and you'll find it easy to create eye-pleasing visuals that help you communicate with impact.

## Table Of Contents

Eight steps to a successful meeting presentation . . . . . 2
Advantages of flip chart presentations . . . . . 3
How to design a flip chart . . . . . 4
Guidelines for professional looking flip charts . . . . . 5
Special presentation effects . . . . . 7
Supplies and accessories resource . (DELETED.) . . . . . 8-12

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# 8 STEPS TO A SUCCESSFUL MEETING PRESENTATION

No matter how good your meeting facility may be or what type of audio visual aids you use, without a good presentation you are likely to undermine the other positive aspects of your meeting and, thus, its chance for success. The following guidelines are intended to help you avoid common pitfalls and introduce some fundamental communication skills which every presenter should be familiar with.

1 **Set an agenda on what the presentation will cover.** An agenda is commonly referred to as the meeting's blueprint. It is important, therefore, for a presenter to develop his or her own agenda in order to make the discussion progress as intended. The agenda can be entirely written out or, if the presenter is extremely knowledgeable on the subject matter, abbreviated as an outline. In drafting the agenda always keep in mind the importance of meeting the presentation's goals and objectives.

2 **Prepare written materials for participants.** Many times, it is effective to provide participants with handouts before your presentation. These will provide information on what you are trying to get across in the meeting and gives them something to take away for future reference. Keep the material brief and to the point—no one wants to read a huge volume about the meeting they have just attended.

3 **Develop a stage presence.** You don't have to become a seasoned performer overnight, but you should appear calm, competent and confident in front of your audience. Take time to prepare a solid presentation that you know in its entirety.

4 **Open the meeting with a brief prepared statement.** Do not put your audience to sleep right at the start with a long rambling statement. Begin with something that will grab attention. Employing a sense of humor at this point is often useful. To be sure participants will understand the subject, start with something familiar and work from there.

5 **Audio-visual aids add spark to your presentation.** *There are a variety of ways in which a presenter can graphically or visually present information to an audience. Audio-visual aids can be as simple as showing graphs or using overhead transparencies to viewing specially produced videotapes. Of course, budget constraints will govern the types of extras you will be able to add to your presentation. Simply because certain presentation aids may be more expensive, there is no guarantee they will be more effective.*

6 **Get participants involved in the presentation.** Nothing is more boring to an audience than a presenter who dominates the discussion. Encourage participation by posing open ended questions and re-directing questions aimed at you to others in the group. Do not, however, let one or several group members dominate, or let-off-the-track subjects take over the discussion. You should always remain in control and direct the flow of the meeting.

7 **Correct misunderstandings quickly.** Make sure participants are comprehending the information you are relaying to them. Redefine complex terms or concepts for ease of understanding and supply necessary information that you may have inadvertently omitted earlier in the presentation. Above all else, you want to avoid having participants come away with the wrong message.

8 **Know when to close a presentation.** It is important to know when to bring your remarks to a close. Reiterate any major points to ensure that your audience knows what points you feel are most important. Making a final statement is recommended, but like an opening statement, *keep it short.*

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# ADVANTAGES OF FLIP CHART PRESENTATIONS

Though not the most sophisticated visual aid available in today's technology, flip charts are certainly one of the most popular. They are simple, inexpensive, versatile, and when used with thought and creativity, highly effective.

**The flip chart is positioned in front of the audience**

- Using previously drawn charts, the presenter faces the audience and maintains eye contact.
- The presenter can observe reactions and adjust the presentation accordingly.

**The flip chart is simple to use**

- The flip chart complements the presenter-it doesn't replace him.
- The presenter controls the flip chart and can easily coordinate his or her visual and verbal messages.
- The flip chart allows the presenter to move easily between different lessons, charts, maps and other visuals-almost instantly.
- Versatility-Flip charts are appropriate for most meeting and training situations, with no need to be placed near an outlet. They require no electrical wiring or special lighting, unlike many other visual aids.
- The flip chart allows the presenter to write or draw spontaneously as he or she speaks.

**Flip charts aid learning comprehension and retention.**

- Audiences are capable of accepting information at four or five times the rate at which the average speaker talks, flip charts increase retention by involving the minds excess capacity to learn.
- Recording comments from the group reinforces key concepts and spurs members to build new ideas off them.

**Flip charts can be home-made.**

- Basic art skills possessed by everyone are enough to produce dramatic professional looking flip charts.
- Equipment for flip chart production is inexpensive and readily available.

**Flip charts save time.**

- The presenter can save time over working on a chalkboard by preparing flip charts in advance.
- Flip charts can be used for quick reference or review and can be easily stored for future use.



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# HOW TO DESIGN A FLIP CHART

Flip charts are easy to use, inexpensive and require a minimum of space for storage. Still, like mastering any other skill, the better you understand the tools involved the more proficient you'll become. Following is a list of materials, some obvious, some not, that you will find helpful in producing effective and visually attractive flip charts.

## MATERIALS

The Easel: The easel should be simple to use, sturdy and portable. Purchase one with the following characteristics:

- A back support plate that extends over the entire easel pad. This support makes it easier to write on the pad, particularly when you reach the bottom of the page.
- The legs should be braced for stability.
- A tray or shelf for marker storage is useful.

**The Pad:** The standard flip chart pad measures 2, inches wide and 34 inches long. There are several variations regarding the paper's weight, texture and thickness however, the most popular choice is a 16 pound paper for spontaneously drawn charts. For charts that will be re-used constantly, a slightly heavier paper is recommended.

Many flip chart pads also come with a one-inch light blue grid printed on the paper. This grid offers several advantages:

- Permits the presenter to print in a straight horizontal plane
- Allows the presenter to line up margins, headings and subheadings.
- Permits a sense of symmetry and spacing in drawings and charts.

**The Marker:** Washable and permanent felt-tip markers are available in several colors.The best choice is one that will not bleed through to the next page and offers vivid color.

**Ruler/yardstick:** Rulers or yardsticks allow you to draw straight lines and underline. They also come in handy when drawing circles. There are two methods for doing this. The first requires holding the end of the ruler or yardstick at the center of where you want your circle and then measuring to the outer edge and marking it with a pencil or marker. Now pivot the ruler, making a series of dots that can then be connected to form a circle.

The second involves a little more advance preparation. Take a wooden ruler or yardstick and drill a small hole (no larger than 1/32 of an inch) in the center at the one inch mark. Then drill similar holes every inch or two along the length of the ruler. Then simply use the instrument like a compass, with a stick pin at the one inch mark and a pencil at the circles outer edge.

Note: If you use a yardstick, try cutting it down to 27 inches, this will make it long enough to reach from edge to edge on the flip chart pad, but short enough to fit a poster tube or diagonally in most suitcases for travelling.

**X-acto or pocket knife:** There are many good uses for a sharp blade, including opening boxes of material, cutting tape, etc. But perhaps its best use on a flip chart is for trimming off prepared charts without having to tear and possibly ruin them. Be careful, though, not to cut too deep or you will remove the pages below as well.

**Tape:** Use clear adhesive tape to attach prepared charts to your pad on the easel. Masking tape will work for this as well but clear tape is less obtrusive. Double sided tape is also useful. Use it to attach reveals and other materials to your flip chart.

Note: If you plan on seting up a panorama of flipchart sheets, masking tape is less destructive to walls, paint and wallpaper.



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# GUIDELINES FOR PROFESSIONAL LOOKING FLIP CHARTS

## Lettering

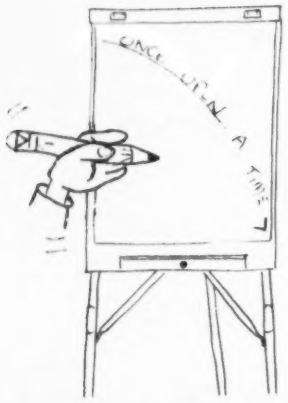
Use simple block lettering on your flip charts and take some time to practice printing clearly in large, easy to read letters. Good printing involves four factors: Consistency • Motion • Position • Time.

**Consistency.** Avoid tall, thin, ornate, cursive or flowery lettering. Use printed block letters, all in capitals. No lettering should be smaller than 1¼" high which is adequate for a distance of 35 feet.

AbcDef ABCDEF
ABCDEF ABCDEF
Wrong Correct

**Motion:** DO NOT labor over your printing. Produce letters with a fluid but sharp, crisp movement using pull-down strokes of the pen. You will have more control over your hand when pulling down than pushing up.

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQR
STUVWXYZ1234567890



**Position:** Refers to the letter and to your body (where you stand in relation to the easel).

Stand directly in front of the chart, your body centered over the left half, if you're right-handed.

The primary reason printing wanders, usually down, is the limited span (the arc) of your arm. If you stand to the side, you can't reach the farther area of the pad.

Where you place the cross strokes of letters such as "A" and "H" may not seem important to you the presenter, but remember, your audience is going to be several yards away. What looks like a "B" up close may look like a "D" to someone in the audience. Careful attention should be paid to details.

Wrong Correct

**Time:** During a discussion, don't try to write everything. Focus on the key phrases or words. They'll usually occur at the beginning or end of the participant's comments.

### USE COLOR FOR PUNCH

The correct use of color in charts can make a difference in the dynamics of a presentation and the acceptance of the content. Use color to draw attention to the center of interest or a heading.

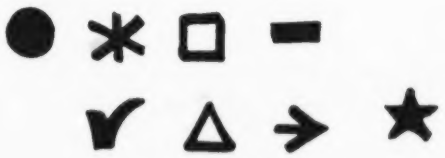
- Black, blue, and green offer the greatest visibility.
- Avoid purple, brown, pink, and yellow.
- Red should only be used as an accent color. Use for bullets, underlines, arrows etc.
- Using colors in combination on a chart is very effective. Two colors are better than one. Three can be used if done carefully and with purpose.

A sense of organization and flow can be enhanced through proper use of color combinations. Too much color can bring confusion. Use color to unify or highlight what you want the audience to see.

### USE BULLETS TO HIGHLIGHT

The term bullet specifically refers to the round dot. However, asterisks, squares, arrows, and dashes all fall under the same general heading. Bullets are used to highlight certain points or distinguish between different items.

The size of the bullet depends on the size of the letters printed. For letters between 1⅛" - 1¼" use a ¾" bullet.





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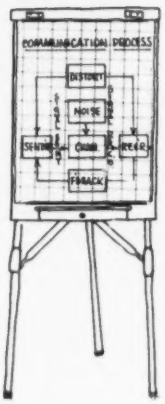
## GRID SHEETS.

Grid imprinted easel pads (as mentioned earlier) offer an advantage; they permit the presenter to quickly count boxes (one-inch) to vary lettering size, and align various items. This is especially useful for charts that are drawn spontaneously.

Organization charts and flow charts such as the one to the right, require very specific positioning for each element since space is at a premium. These charts require grid paper for their accuracy.




## AMOUNT OF LETTERING ON A FLIP CHART.

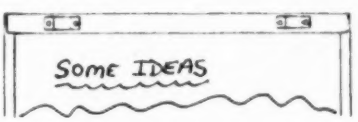
When designing a flip chart having mostly type (no drawings/charts) keep the following in mind:

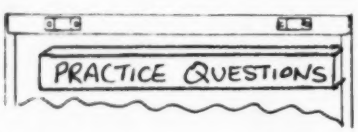
- White space makes the chart look cleaner and easier to read.
- Use a margin of at least three or four inches. If the points consist of a word or two, a seven or eight-inch margin may be appropriate.
- Indent subordinate items and distinguish them from the major point with a different bullet.
- Keep all items, major or subordinate, lined up vertically.
- Subordinate items provide an appropriate place to change color. If the major point was printed in blue with a green dot, the sub-item may be printed in green with a blue asterisk. This will provide a sense of unity within the chart.

If your flip chart has more than 35 to 40 words you are crowding it (or using lettering too small), and you should consider making two or more flip charts in a series.

## HEADINGS.

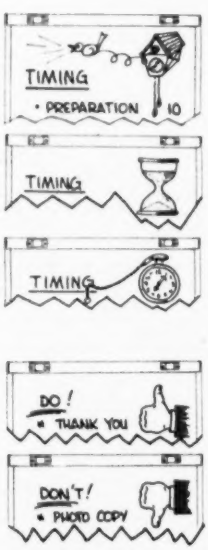
It is a good idea to place a title or heading at the top of a flip chart. A heading orients the audience to the idea or concept presented in the chart. Headings should be bold, underlined, enclosed, or in a different color to distinguish them from the rest of the information on the chart.



## Non-Verbal Symbols

Non-verbal characters can be extremely effective and you don't have to be an artist to use them. Simple designs such as the stick figure and the "happy face" are made with simple strokes yet are excellent at graphically transmitting messages of action or emotion. Another non-verbal which is effective is the thumb's up or thumb's down sign for demonstrating "do's" and "don'ts". Charts dealing with timing and efficiency are good places for non-verbal symbols such as the hour glass or pocket watch.







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# Special Visual Effects

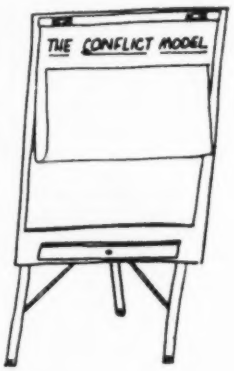
**REVEALS:** You may wish to disclose only part of an idea or part of a chart or graph at a time - or you may wish to project a question and reveal the correct answer after it has been discussed and answered by the audience. This is especially effective in an instructional situation.

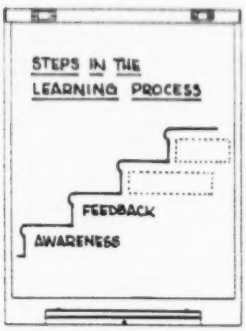
Reveals are made by first preparing the complete flip chart, with all parts of the idea, graph, or question and the answer. Cover those parts of the chart you do not wish the audience to see immediately.

**AREA REVEAL** - Used for progressively uncovering certain areas of the flip chart at one time.

In this model, the bottom of the page is brought up to cover the points on the same page.

Another method of accomplishing this type of reveal is to use one large piece of paper to cover all the points. The entire sheet is moved down as points are uncovered and discussed.



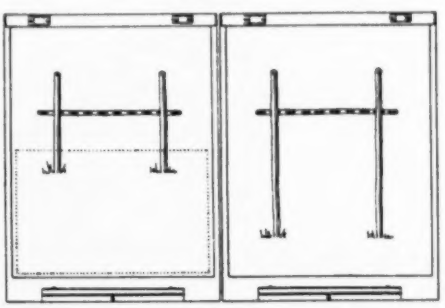




**STRIP REVEAL** - Used for randomly revealing certain areas of the flip chart at one time.

In this model, strips of paper are placed over certain points on the chart, and removed at the appropriate time.

**EXPANDED REVEAL** Similar to the strip reveal but permits two points to be made from each reveal.

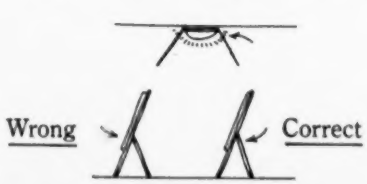
By drawing on the reveal, one image is displayed. But, once the reveal is removed, the original image is transformed and offers a completely different concept.



# Orchestration of Visuals

A well-orchestrated presentation occurs when the visual is synchronized with what the presenter is verbally communicating. Not keeping the visuals in sync with the presentation will confuse and frustrate your audience. The following are a few helpful hints in synchronizing your presentation for better audience reception:

- Make sure your light source is in front of your easel for easier viewing.
- Always number easels and mark your notes accordingly. This will help you locate the next chart more easily, as well as assist in setting up the presentation.
- Leave two or three pages between the printed ones. This will prevent the audience from seeing the next chart prematurely, and you will have a blank page at your disposal to spontaneously draw charts.
- Use a mix of pre-drawn and spontaneously drawn charts to change pace. For example, you might display a chart with prepared questions and as each point is discussed write key words as a reminder or to help lead the discussion.



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